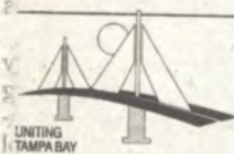


... section **D**

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1993



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Nelson Poynter 1938 - 1978
Eugene Patterson 1978 - 1988
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The policy of our paper is very simple — merely to tell the truth.

Lifting every voice

■ Desktop broadcasting brings the power of the media to the individual.

By Carl Malamud

For 20 years, we have been hearing and reading about the global village, a futuristic vision of how we will live in a wired world with instantaneous communication. Over the last two years, something remarkable has happened: The global village has become a reality.

The core to this futuristic world is a network of computer networks called the Internet. Gradually, all the computers in the world are starting to get hooked up. Commercial networks like Prodigy or CompuServe or MCI Mail are

starting to connect to high-speed data highways, a global interstate system for computer traffic.

The Internet started in the United States as a research experiment sponsored by the Defense Advance Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the National Science Foundation. Gradually, this remarkable example of international cooperation grew into a network of 14-million people in 106 countries. The Internet is growing explosively, expanding at a rate of 15 to 20 percent per month.

At first, computer networks were used as an electronic version of the post office, a means of exchanging mail messages. These electronic mail messages soon became a vital necessity for those of us who lead our professional and personal lives on the Internet. It is not unusual for me to wake up in the morning and see messages from people in a half-dozen countries.

Please see **INTERNET 6D**

■ Carl Malamud, an economist and writer in Alexandria, Va., is the founder of Internet Talk Radio. ■

Internet from 1D

Electronic mail is a vital service on networks, but we are beginning to see a huge variety of other services. The Wide Area Information Service (WAIS), for example, is an on-line document library which you search by asking simple questions in English.

"Is there any poetry that talks about love around?" you might ask. WAIS would come back with a list of Shakespearean love sonnets. The location where the sonnets are stored is transparent to you: WAIS makes the world into your local library.

Recently, the Internet has taken a spurt forward. Under the leadership of people like then-Sen. Al Gore, bills passed Congress to expand the U.S. portion of the Internet, forming a national data superhighway. The Clinton-Gore administration has made this area one of its priorities, a way of beginning to get an electronic infrastructure to support business, education, and government into the next century.

The need for a national network infrastructure is underscored in recent proposals for a town hall, an electronic meeting place where government officials and other leaders can talk to the public (and where the public can make their views known).

Recently, that town hall has started to become a reality. With the help of many people in the engineering community, I've started Internet Talk Radio: a new medium for communications. We start with a radio metaphor because that metaphor is familiar.

Internet Talk Radio is simply a way of moving programs to your computer, where you play them. Any Macintosh and most other computers now have multimedia support: the ability to display art and photographs, to play sound, or to even play video movies.

Internet Talk Radio is at the crossroads of multimedia and the global Internet. Building on the research efforts of pioneers at places like Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories and Xerox PARC (Palo Alto Research Center), Internet Talk Radio combines the professional journalism of the classic media with the responsiveness and scope of the Internet.

We call this radio, but it is a different kind of radio. Think of a radio station which you can start or stop at will. You can rewind the program, or fast forward past the commercials. You can even change the order, listening to the restaurant review first instead of during the break.

Radio is just the start. Internet Talk Radio has the ability of being a truly live, interactive medium. Everyone of our listeners could participate in an interactive game show. Or, an international town hall could allow people to talk to our guests, to conduct instantaneous polls, or to distribute background information to those listeners who want to get an in-depth view of the network.

Already, video conferences are being held on the Internet, bringing people from 20 countries together in an electronic meeting room. Today, those videoconferences are used mostly by the technical community, but we want to see a day where ordinary citizens can walk up to their computer, see the president of the United States, and tell him what they think.

Desktop broadcasting brings the power of the media to the individual, allowing one person to express complex material using a variety of communications tools. Moving the Internet from plain text messages into multimedia is akin to the move from the telex to the telephone.

The Internet is a powerful force for democratic values and for an informed, responsive government. The Clinton/Gore proposals for an information infrastructure are laying the crucial building blocks for the next century, doing for our children what the builders of the railroads, the telephones, and the interstate highways did for us.

■ Carl Malamud may be reached on the Internet as carl@radio.com. ■